

NEWTON YOUTH COMMISSION Meeting
January 5, 2011 MINUTES
Location: Newton City Hall Cafeteria

Present: Joe De Vito Chair, Richard Dyer, Chris Fortunato, Matt Green, Peter Harrington, Jeff Mace, Ellen Manning, Stephanie Lapham, Stephan Ross, Terence Sack, Robert Staulo,
Staff: Ruth Hoshino, School Nurse Leader, Health and Human Services
Guests: Tom Pomeroy, Karen Lischinsky
Student Interns: Teekhon Davidoff(NSHS), Jaya Forsythe(NNHS), Khane Grant(NNHS), Many Lopez, Issac Rogers(NSHS), Zoë Smith(Dana Hall), Jay Sobel (NSHS)

The meeting was opened at 7:05 PM and chaired by Joe De Vito.

A vote to accept the minutes of December 1, 2010 was passed.

Treasurer's report: The budget for FY 2010 operating budget is \$2500. No new activity.

New or Old Business

Mayor's Public Service Internship Program Update:

Chris and Ellen have been meeting weekly with the interns.

Recording Conversation with Teens:

Following up on an idea from the last meeting, Chris recorded about one hour of teen conversation. (The video camera was very basic and the quality of the recording was variable). Topics of discussion ranged from, how to communicate with parents, drugs and alcohol, academic pressure and pressure in general. The group is seeking suggested topics for future recordings from Youth Commission members and other adults (perhaps through PTO's). These topics could generate candid, authentic, unscripted conversations that would be of interest to parents and others. Relevant resources could be posted at the end of the conversations. There is an idea to post edited versions of these conversations on YouTube with a link from the City of Newton website. It would be necessary to inform the potential viewing audience and the school department of the intent and content of the recording. This idea will be presented to the mayor and proper authorization procedures will be followed. Signed parental permission for the teens to participate may be obtained. The goal is to have this be an ongoing project year-to-year. The question was raised as to whether Youth Commission funds could be used to purchase a video camera. Ruth will check on this.

Suggested topics/questions from the Youth Commission:

- Is it normal for a teen to sleep until 1PM on weekends?
 - Responses:
 - Kids don't get enough sleep due to stress and lots of homework
 - That's just what teens do
- How do parents strike a balance between being involved and informed about their child and maintaining privacy and not crossing the line?
 - Responses:
 - Don't go to extremes such as putting GPS on phones
 - Monitoring computers is too much
- Is it okay for parents to search their child's bedroom?
 - Responses
 - Only if there was a problem related to drugs
 - Parents shouldn't assume there are problems if there are no signals
 - Talk to your kids first – ask about what is going on

- What happens if you know a friend lied to their parents about drug use – would you tell the parents?
 - Responses
 - It depends on how dangerous the situation is
 - Would go to their own parents first to discuss the situation

Public Service

December – interns baked cookies and brought them to the Second Step shelter.

January – Interns are planning a “Teen Night” at the Cherry Street Teen Center. They will fund raise by charging admission and donate profits to a charity. Ruth will check to see if this is allowable.

On-Line Drug Prevention Program Review

Interns viewed an online high school version of a drug and alcohol prevention program. The universal response was that it was not well done. There was too much talking and it was to “preachy”. The graphics were outdated and the information, although accurate, was not presented well. It would be better if it was more interactive.

They also reviewed a site called E-Chug (college level) that asks about risky behaviors and then gives a customized, personal report that compares those behaviors to factors such as the cost of the behavior, the amount of time, etc. This seemed to have more relevance and the teens liked the personal nature of the results.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM

The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 2, 2011 at 7 PM

Respectfully submitted by Ruth Hoshino